

## Dos and Don'ts for Earning Local Media Attention

### Finding Your Local Media Contacts –

**For TV** - Each major city should have local “affiliates” or versions of ABC, NBC, CBS, Fox and, perhaps an independent television station. Google search, for example “ABC affiliate and [your city]” for the “call letters” and Website address of that television station. Visit the Website’s “contact us” page for a phone number and call the station. Ask to speak to the “assignment desk.” Ask for the names and contact information of one or two assignment editors, an assignment manager and a morning producer. Ask also if the station has a designated health reporter. If so, get his or her contact info and plan to send correspondence to that person, as well.

**For Newspapers** - Call your local newspaper’s news desk and ask for the name and contact information of the city or metro editor and the health editor or reporter, if they have one. Do a Google search with your city and “business paper” to find the Website for your town’s business publication, if there is one. Call them and ask who writes health-related business stories. Send that person the pitch or release.

**For Radio Stations** - For local talk radio stations make sure you send pitches to news directors and radio talk show hosts.

### Sending Your Pitch

Use the press release provided and place it in the body of an e-mail (NOT as an attachment). Place a cryptic, albeit snappy title in the subject line, such as “Time-Sensitive Health Story Idea” or “Time-Sensitive Local Story Idea.” Type the following preamble just before the press release itself in the body of the e-mail: “Hi, {media contact’s first name}. I am a doula in your area and I thought you might be interested in covering this growing national trend. I am available to interview about what a doula is, what I am doing locally as a doula in this region, to describe the strict standards of practice for doulas and how parents can find a doula that is right for them. Please contact me at {list phone number and e-mail address here} to schedule an interview.”

Send the release to a few media personnel at each outlet of interest. Just because one reporter, producer or assignment editor is not interested in your story does not mean another one at the same publication or station would not be.

### Conducting Follow-up Calls to the Media

Once you have sent the press release to your local media personnel, call them to follow up and make sure they received and/or read the correspondence. Take note, if they ask you to call them again after a particular date and time and keep your word. If they don’t sound interested, simply move on to the next media contact person on your list. **Do not** call the media more than once to pitch your idea, otherwise they may feel harassed.

**If the Media Express Interest in Interviewing You, Call your DONA Public Relations Director – Stefanie Antunes!!**

If a media outlet expresses interest in interviewing you (even right then on the phone), tell them you will need to call them back. Find out their deadline and contact information and tell them you are unable to have a lengthy conversation right then (although this may not really be true, it will buy you needed prep time). Ask them how much time they need you to allot for the interview and schedule another time to talk. Then, call your DONA Public Relations Director, Stefani Antunes, immediately at (905) 493-2645, even if it is a weekend. This allows us the opportunity to give you a brief media training by phone and it gives you a chance to run through a mock Q&A with me. This type of role-playing can be very useful in making you as comfortable and as prepared as possible for the interview.

**Stefanie Antunes, LCCE, CD(DONA)  
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